Leaving No One Behind in the Skills Development Agenda in Pakistan

A third of Pakistan’s population is between 15 and 29 years old, but the youth have poor educational outcomes, limited skills and lack the confidence to enter the job market and succeed. Skills development, therefore, represents a key development agenda in Pakistan. In order to utilise the youth cohort and effectively harness this demographic dividend, the country needs to locate pathways for skills development at scale. Even though the Government of Pakistan has prioritised action for youth, especially through the national ‘Skills for All’ Strategy, and the Kamyab Jawan Programme (Successful Youth Programme) that was launched in 2019, young people are still finding it hard to find decent jobs. Moreover, the current macroeconomic environment is affecting the private sector, which is responsible for creating more than 90% of jobs in the country.

This panel discussion, thus, aims to contribute to the evidence base on the skills ecosystem of Pakistan and bring together a wide range of views from international partners like UNICEF and the government to think tanks and private firms. The panel will put into perspective the following questions:

1. What does it mean to ‘leave no one behind’ in the skills development agenda in Pakistan?
2. What is the demand for skilled workers?
3. How is skills development organised and how can it be sustained?
4. What is the role of key actors like the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC), the government more broadly, and firm owners in improving the Pakistan’s skills base?

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